3rd February 1925]

Criminal Justice.

Treatment of depressed classes by the Sub-Magistrate of Omalur.

*7 Q.—Mr. R. VEERIAN: Will the hon. the Law Member be pleased to state—

(a) why the members of the depressed classes are not allowed to get into the witness box in the Court of the Sub-Magistrate at Omalur, Salem district, as other classes of people;

(b) whether the Sub-Magistrate of the Omalur Court is a Brahman or non-Brahman; and

(c) whether the Government are aware that Mr. Somallai Pannady (member of the depressed classes), Honorary Magistrate, is not being treated properly by the Sub-Magistrate of Omalur owing to caste prejudice?

A.—The Government have no information.

Mr. R. VEERIAN:—"With reference to clauses (a), (b) and (c) I put the question with a view to elicit information. Here I find that the answer is that the Government have no information. May I therefore know whether the Government think that this is a very trivial matter, that calling for information is not at all necessary and that they do not want to respect the feelings of the submerged, oppressed and depressed classes." (Laughter.)

The hon. Mr. C. P. RAMASWAMI AYYAR:—"I am afraid I must rob my hon. Friend of his satisfaction on that particular subject of having pushed us to a corner. I have got information now. I will read it: 'I have the honour to report that no complaint has been received in this office to the effect that members of the depressed classes are not allowed to get into the witness box in the court of the Sub-Magistrate of Omalur as other classes of people, and from inquiries made, I understand that no such distinction is made. The present Sub-Magistrate of Omalur is a non-Brahman.' As regards the point raised in clause (c), on one occasion the Sub-Magistrate asked Mr. Pannady to go out of the court because he was interested in a particular case. There are no other grievances of Mr. Pannady."

Mr. R. VEERIAN:—"May I know whether the present Sub-Magistrate is a non-Brahman or the previous one?"

The hon. Mr. C. P. RAMASWAMI AYYAR—"The present Sub-Magistrate appears to be a Brahman."

Mr. R. VEERIAN:—"May I know if I get a mahazar, the Government will be pleased to inquire into the matter?"

The hon. Mr. C. P. RAMASWAMI AYYAR:—"That depends on the mahazar."

Police.

Detection of the perpetrator of the St. Thomas' Mount tragedy.

*8 Q.—Sriman SASIBHUSHAN RATH Mahasayo: Will the hon. the Law Member be pleased to state with reference to press communiqué dated 25th November 1924—

(a) whether the Police have so far expressed their inability to apprehend the perpetrator or perpetrators of the St. Thomas' Mount railway station murders;